

## 4 Lower Ham Road/ higher section to Richmond Road

The first house in Lower Ham Road is the 295<sup>th</sup> plot on Richmond Road yet faces to Lower Ham Road, hence the 1.8m close boarded fence around this corner which detracts from the open nature generally of the front boundaries around here. The YMCA boundary is partially open with a chainlink fence which becomes close boarded. The character is like a country lane rather than a suburb of London, reminiscent of seaside holiday 'areas' in northern France. Two-storey, detached houses on narrow plots following Richmond Road orientations become single storey with chalet/ room in roof scale, set-back, with much wider plots towards the riverside with more vernacular or temporary looking/ timber elevations. There is a scale distinction between a 2-storey house and a bungalow with a room in the roof, and this distinction is even more important adjacent an open aspect such as the riverside. As Lower Ham Road turns into the riverside the scale character is distinctly single storey with rooms in the roof. There are exceptions; the recent corner 2-storey 'extension' departs. The 2-storey flat-roofed house, whilst 2-storey, added variety and interest in its modelling and avoided vernacular pastiche, offering a style of its time. A beautiful line of mature trees defines the YMCA edge. There is some minor high front boundary fencing recently erected, which weakens the natural surveillance to the street, and undermines the open boundary character of the frontages. There is an alleyway to Grosvenor Gardens which helps local permeability. A landmark tree planted in 1951 replaced the Elm which had stood for 500 years and was know as half-mile tree (it is about half a mile from Kingston's boundary).



Lower Ham Road close to the river



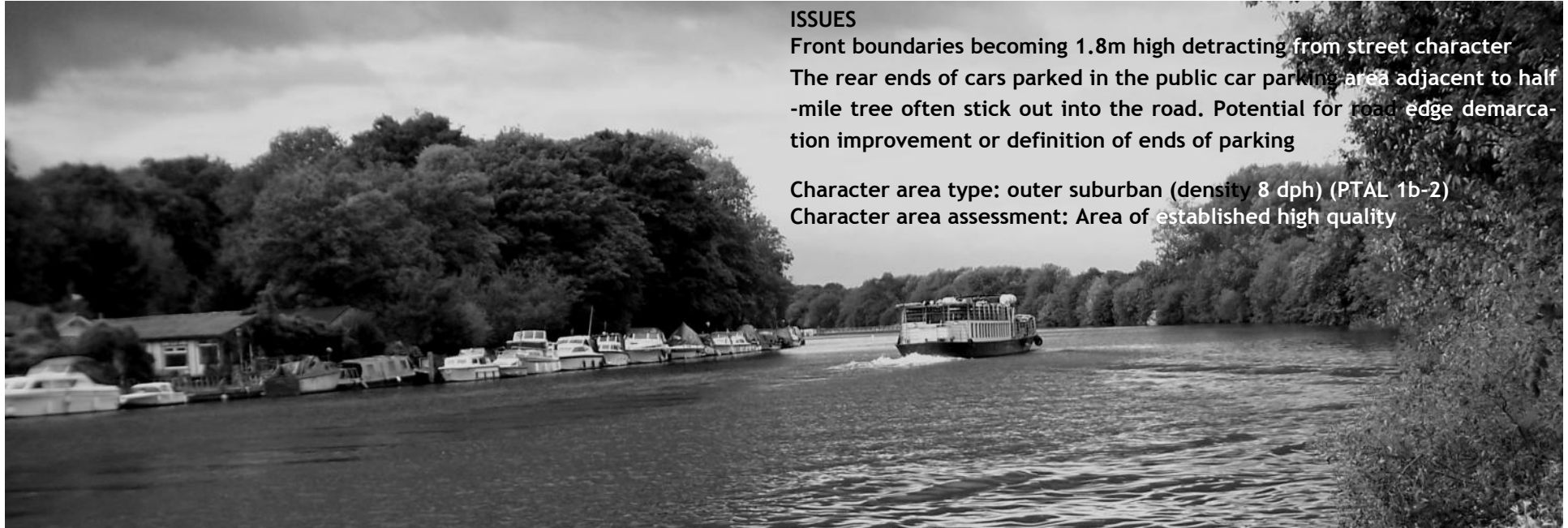
Half-mile Tree



Lower Ham Road close to Richmond Road



Lower Ham Road high front boundary



**ISSUES**

Front boundaries becoming 1.8m high detracting from street character  
The rear ends of cars parked in the public car parking area adjacent to half-mile tree often stick out into the road. Potential for road edge demarcation improvement or definition of ends of parking

Character area type: outer suburban (density 8 dph) (PTAL 1b-2)

Character area assessment: Area of established high quality



Views of some of the houses from Lower Ham Road facing the riverside tow-path, and the river view from the same tow-path



Grass verges which eventually become the bank retaining the high level path

## 5 Lower Ham Road/ lower section by riverside

This stretch is an example of what makes Kingston special. Fine architecture lines a road with the potential to carry cars and people safely, grass verges, informal river edge, outstanding vistas both up and down river, with a Sea Scouts club and young people at the Albany Centre learning to enjoy the Thames in Kingston. This section links Canbury Gardens and the town centre to the riverside leading down river and to north Kingston.

Fine imposing 3-storey, detached, vernacular veranda houses with ornate timber balconies on single storey brickwork bays. Slate roofs with decorated clay ridges, very strong gables with steep pitches, and generous eaves overhangs set-up a rhythm. Low front boundaries feel open plots to river. Can see trees to Albany Park Road beyond through gaps between houses. Significant vista to riverside of Richmond and views up and down river. These houses contribute richly to the character of the riverside and are unique in their setting.

The smaller group of 5 chalet houses are more intimate in scale and characteristically ground plus rooms in roof, or 2-storey with a flat roof, with significant gaps between dwellings, contributing to open fluid space flow i.e. not a wall of development. They are not 2-storey 'straight' design, but chalet, offering a transition in scale from Character Area 4 to the single storey riverside houses on the Richmond bank.

A 2005 public realm project to improve the area around Half-mile Tree has been very successful and attracted so many people that a further scheme would benefit the area, to resolve the issues identified below.



Looking north to Half-mile Tree



Distinctive architecture and well planted front gardens provide a characteristic backdrop to the riverside





Competition for parking is fierce and uncontrolled



Parking reducing the drivers' safe view of the road



Eroded grass verges and unlevel footpath

### ISSUES

- Public realm by entry to riverside paths at Half-mile Tree is poor with uncontrolled parking including obstructing cycleways and parking onto river bank.
- Cars frequently park on the corner opposite the Tree making a potentially dangerous corner
- Grass verges on the east side of the riverside section of road are in eroded condition.
- There is a confusion of hierarchy along the riverside experienced by people walking/cycling from Canbury Gardens to join the riverside path down river—they frequently find themselves forced to share the road with, and yield to, fast moving (frustrated drivers) cars and parked cars

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The public realm and spatial priorities (parking and cars, or bikes and walkers) from the entry to Canbury Gardens along to the Half-mile tree would benefit from review and redesign
- Consider options to reinstate the characteristic grass verges along the road and make good the adjacent footway
- Investigate options to strengthen and define the rivers edge whilst addressing the re-prioritisation of pedestrians and cyclists over motor vehicles.
- Address the unkempt-looking riverbank edge which becomes overgrown with plants encroaching into the road space.
- Consider planting large species trees to provide shade to paths and landscape interest in front of the chalet houses.

**Character area type: outer suburban (density 6 dph) (PTAL 1b)**

**Character area assessment: Area of established high quality**



The proximity of the river attracts cyclists and walkers of all ages and abilities



Children learning to sail gain access from the Albany Centre across a clear, well-defined, safe zone stretch



There is often conflict between cyclists, walkers, parking and car drivers in



From Albany Mews looking to the riverside southwards



Details of the Albany Mews development



Details of the Albany Mews development

## 6 Albany Mews and boathouses

This development departs from the characteristic urban grain and density of the area, following neither the riverside model or the Albany Park Road model. That aside, it is an example of well-designed housing, beautifully kept with planted front gardens which feel semi-public, and making a homezone kind of street without 'trying' too hard. It is not a gated development, though if the gate in the riverside wall were unlocked it would aid permeability. It has a good landscape and public realm.



Riverside gate to Albany Mews

The boundary fence to the rear of the Sea Scout hut is too solid for natural surveillance, unlike that to the Albany Centre. However, the sheds are active boat club sheds and their scale is low in boat-house form. The boat houses add a colour and life to the area entirely characteristic of a riverside setting, i.e. masts, boat trailers, flag poles etc.

**Character area type: inner suburban (density 35 dph) (PTAL 1b)**

**Character area assessment: Area with scope to reinforce existing character**



## 7 Grosvenor Gardens/ Richmond Road

The houses at this end of Albany Park Road have characterful 2-storey, square detailed bays to close-set, detached houses with terracotta-crinkle tiled, hipped roof forms. There is a unity in their common appearance which has balance and makes a quality street frontage.

Grosvenor Gardens has housing similar to Richmond Road opposite Tiffin School, with 2-storey, semi-detached houses with large, well-planted front gardens with most front boundaries intact.

In its cul-de-sac is a dark brick 3-storey house (no.20) out of character in height and width with the rest of the street, but with interesting modelling and roof forms, different from 1930's suburbia. Link to Lower Ham Road via alley.

**Character area type: outer suburban (density 18 dph) (PTAL 1b)**

**Character area assessment: Area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity**



Albany Road by Richmond Road



Grosvenor Gardens from Richmond Road



Grosvenor Gardens to Richmond Road



Grosvenor Gardens cul-de-sac

## 8 Richmond Road (Tiffin Girls School to the Hawker Centre)

This section of Richmond Road has high quality suburban planning from c1930. Almost exclusively 2-storey, semi-detached houses with a few recent infill developments; 3no. 3-storey flat blocks which appear out of character in scale and plot footprint. The houses share common architectural features which vary across the houses and include joined, 2-storey central gable bays, double gable central bays, porches, partial timbering. The architectural coherence comes from a select range of materials (render, brick, clay tile), plot footprint, building line, articulated interesting roofscapes (main roofs are hipped in quality clay), planted front gardens and front boundaries. A valuable element of the 1930s planning concept is the generous space around each house (sometimes a detached garage) and deep rear gardens as well as a street supporting the 'green' concept of wide verges containing tree planting which mitigates the noise from this busy road. There remains one Surrey County Council cast-iron marker post from 1902 (see below), one of four which marked the extent of an ear-marked road scheme for the continuation of Lancaster Gardens through to the riverside (hence infill development visible today). It is a replacement as the OS map from 1868 shows posts in place. As the last remaining of four, it is worthy of protection from loss/damage.

**Character area type: outer suburban (density 21 dph) (PTAL 1b-2)**

**Character area assessment: Area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity**



Houses fronting Richmond Road



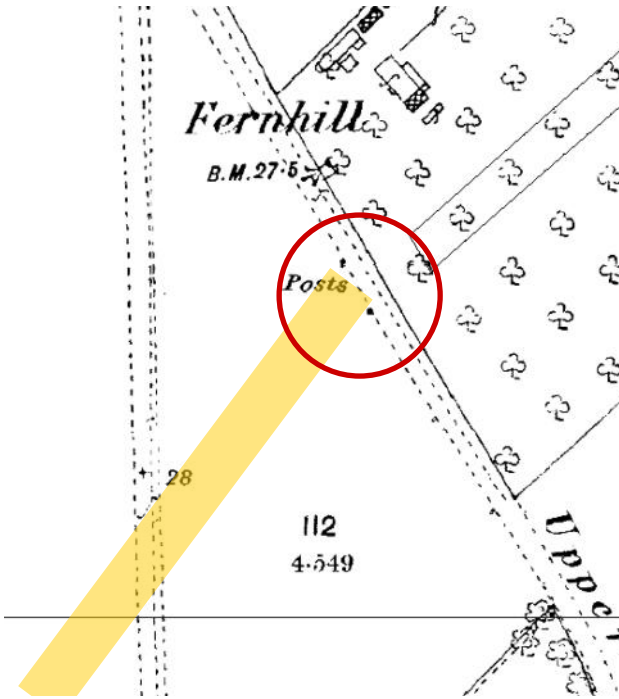
Richmond Road street sections



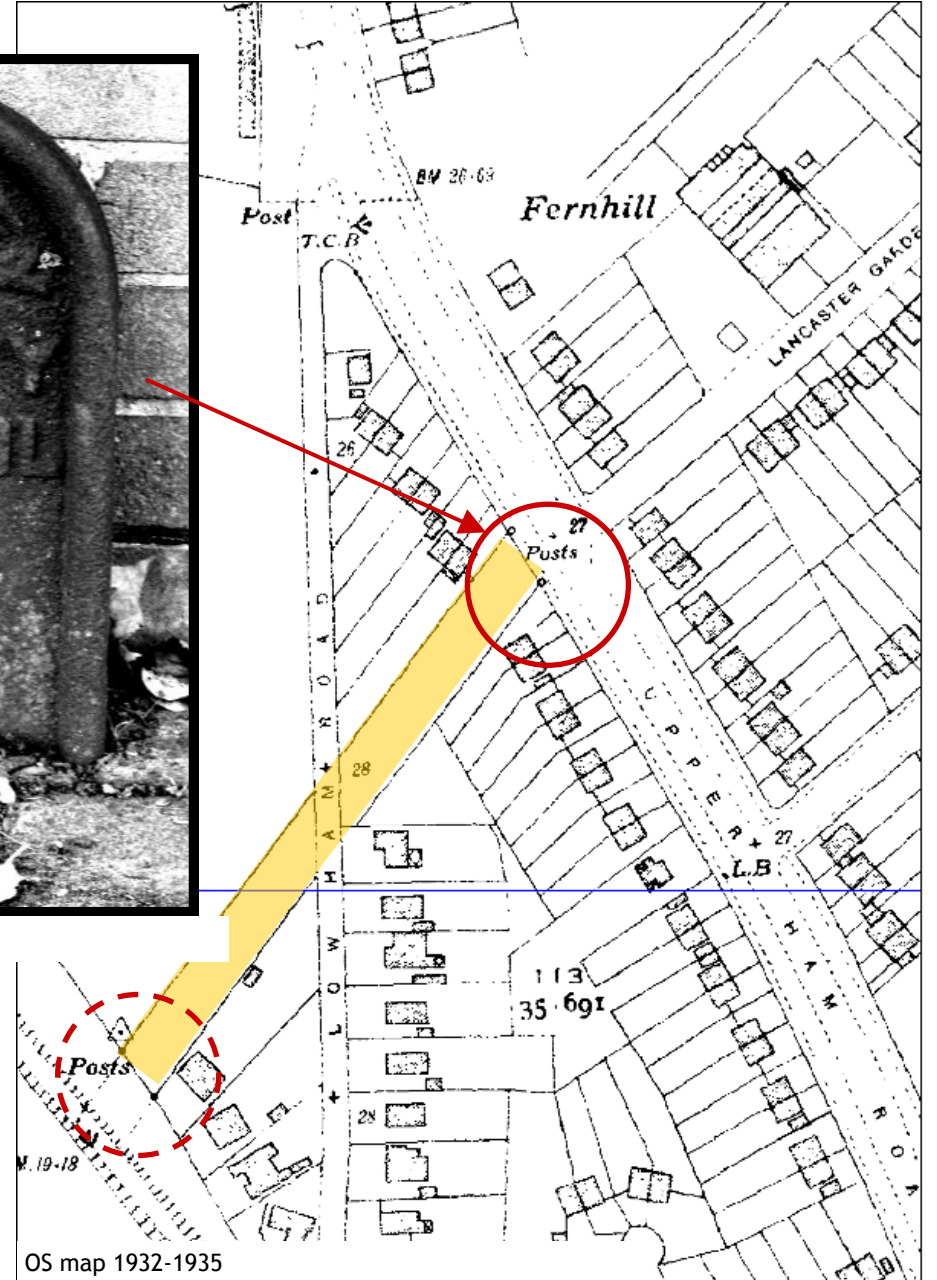
Marker Post from 1902 (photo 2010)



Marker Post from 1902 (photo 2010)



OS map 1868-1885



OS map 1932-1935



## 9 St. George's Industrial Estate

A neutral collection of 2-storey sheds on a private estate road. Street parking feels exposed especially when the car-park behind the development is largely empty (most parking spaces close to the units appear taken by staff, hence customers and deliveries park in road). The Nikon Building fronting Richmond Road is a characterless but neutral, 3-storey, dark glass building.

**Character area type: outer suburban (PTAL 2)**

**Character area assessment: Area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity**



Staff cars obstruct access/deliveries whilst the car-park remains almost empty



Fernhill Road



Fernhill Road house type



Fernhill Road porch type

## 10 Fernhill Gardens and Lancaster Gardens

**Fernhill:** 1930s 2-storey semi-detached hipped pairs with 2-storey bays alternating with hips or gables over. Pairs are joined by garages. Interesting timber fenestration and spandrel panel to porch detail. Architectural coherence of forms and street rhythm weakened by gap-closing extensions. Some front boundary loss and treeless footpaths weaken the street scene. Bitmac and slab footpaths appear untidy.

**Lancaster Gardens:** The houses are similar to Fernhill but with wider, deeper bays and different porch details. Houses as hipped pairs. First 2 on south side are Fernhill type then house type changes to Lancaster. Many roofs altered from hip to gable. North side contains some 2-storey maisonettes. Better retention of front boundaries than Fernhill. Footpaths are a single material (bitmac) and granite kerbs accommodate front garden car parking better than Fernhill.

**Lancaster Close:** This development followed circa 7 years after the main street; 2-storey semi-detached maisonettes with well planted front gardens. 3no. 3-storey blocks of flats very out of scale in height and all focused on the cul de sac. Garages behind.

**Character area type: outer suburban (PTAL 1b-2)**

**Character area assessment: Area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity**



Lancaster Road house type



Lancaster Road



Lancaster Road maisonettes



Lancaster Close



Recent extensions in Fernhill Road